

(c)(1) Applications for emergency or special temporary authority involving safety of life or property (including national security emergencies) or involving a brief transition period facilitating continuity of service to a substantial number of customers or end users, will not be subject to the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section. However, paragraphs (a) and (b) will be applied to permanent authorizations for these services.

(2) Provisions of paragraph (a) and (b) of this section will not apply to application or request for authorization to which 11 U.S.C. 525(a) is applicable.

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET—CONSUMER
REPORTING AGENCIES—CONTRACTING
FOR COLLECTION

§ 1.1911 Demand for payment.

(a) Written demand as described in paragraph (b) of this section, and which may be in the form of a letter, order, memorandum, or other form of written communication, will be made promptly upon a debtor of the United States in terms that inform the debtor of the consequences of failing to cooperate to resolve the debt. The specific content, timing, and number of demand letters depend upon the type and amount of the debt, including, e.g., any notes and the terms of agreements of the parties, and the debtor's response, if any, to the Commission's letters or telephone calls. One demand letter will be deemed sufficient. In determining the timing of the demand letter(s), the Commission will give due regard to the need to refer debts promptly to the Department of Justice for litigation, in accordance with the FCCS. When necessary to protect the Government's interest (for example, to prevent the expiration of a statute of limitations), written demand may be preceded by other appropriate actions under the FCCS, including immediate referral for litigation. The demand letter does not provide an additional period within to challenge the existence of, or amount of the non-tax debt if such time period has expired under Commission rules or other applicable limitation periods. Nothing contained herein is intended to limit the Commission's authority or

discretion as may otherwise be permitted to collect debts owed.

(b) The demand letter will inform the debtor of:

(1) The basis for the indebtedness and the opportunities, if any, of the debtor to request review within the Commission;

(2) The applicable standards for assessing any interest, penalties, and administrative costs (§§ 1.1940 and 1.1941);

(3) The date by which payment is to be made to avoid late charges and enforced collection, which normally will not be more than 30 days from the date that the initial demand letter was mailed or hand-delivered; and

(4) The name, address, and phone number of a contact person or office within the Commission.

(c) The Commission will expend all reasonable effort to ensure that demand letters are mailed or hand-delivered on the same day that they are dated. As provided for in any agreement among parties, or as may be required by exigent circumstances, the Commission may use other forms of delivery, including, e.g., facsimile telecopier or electronic mail. There is no prescribed format for demand letters. The Commission utilizes demand letters and procedures that will lead to the earliest practicable determination of whether the debt can be resolved administratively or must be referred for litigation.

(d) The Commission may, as circumstances and the nature of the debt permit, include in demand letters such items as the Commission's willingness to discuss alternative methods of payment; its policies with respect to the use of credit bureaus, debt collection centers, and collection agencies; the Commission's remedies to enforce payment of the debt (including assessment of interest, administrative costs and penalties, administrative garnishment, the use of collection agencies, Federal salary offset, tax refund offset, administrative offset, and litigation); the requirement that any debt delinquent for more than 180 days be transferred to the Department of the Treasury for collection; and, depending on applicable statutory authority, the debtor's entitlement to consideration of a waiver. Where applicable, the debtor will be

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provided with a period of time (normally not more than 15 calendar days) from the date of the demand in which to exercise the opportunity to request a review.

(e) The Commission will respond promptly to communications from the debtor, within 30 days whenever feasible, and will advise debtors who dispute the debt that they must furnish available evidence to support their contentions.

(f) Prior to the initiation of the demand process or at any time during or after completion of the demand process, if the Commission determines to pursue, or is required to pursue, offset, the procedures applicable to offset in §§ 1.1912 and 1.1913, as applicable, will be followed. The availability of funds or money for debt satisfaction by offset and the Commission's determination to pursue collection by offset shall release the Commission from the necessity of further compliance with paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

(g) Prior to referring a debt for litigation, the Commission will advise each person determined to be liable for the debt that, unless the debt can be collected administratively, litigation may be initiated. This notification will follow the requirements of Executive Order 12988 (3 CFR, 1996 Comp., pp. 157-163) and may be given as part of a demand letter under paragraph (b) of this section or in a separate document. Litigation counsel for the Government will be advised that this notice has been given.

(h) When the Commission learns that a bankruptcy petition has been filed with respect to a debtor, before proceeding with further collection action, the Commission may immediately seek legal advice from its counsel concerning the impact of the Bankruptcy Code on any pending or contemplated collection activities. Unless the Commission determines that the automatic stay imposed at the time of filing pursuant to 11 U.S.C. 362 has been lifted or is no longer in effect, in most cases collection activity against the debtor should stop immediately.

(1) After seeking legal advice, a proof of claim will be filed in most cases with the bankruptcy court or the Trustee. The Commission will refer to

the provisions of 11 U.S.C. 106 relating to the consequences on sovereign immunity of filing a proof of claim.

(2) If the Commission is a secured creditor, it may seek relief from the automatic stay regarding its security, subject to the provisions and requirements of 11 U.S.C. 362.

(3) Offset is stayed in most cases by the automatic stay. However, the Commission will determine from its counsel whether its payments to the debtor and payments of other agencies available for offset may be frozen by the Commission until relief from the automatic stay can be obtained from the bankruptcy court. The Commission will also determine from its counsel whether recoupment is available.

§ 1.1912 Collection by administrative offset.

(a) *Scope.* (1) The term *administrative offset* has the meaning provided in § 1.1901.

(2) This section does not apply to:

(i) Debts arising under the Social Security Act, except as provided in 42 U.S.C. 404;

(ii) Payments made under the Social Security Act, except as provided for in 31 U.S.C. 3716(c) (see 31 CFR 285.4, Federal Benefit Offset);

(iii) Debts arising under, or payments made under, the Internal Revenue Code (see 31 CFR 285.2, Tax Refund Offset) or the tariff laws of the United States;

(iv) Offsets against Federal salaries to the extent these standards are inconsistent with regulations published to implement such offsets under 5 U.S.C. 5514 and 31 U.S.C. 3716 (see 5 CFR part 550, subpart K, and 31 CFR 285.7, Federal Salary Offset);

(v) Offsets under 31 U.S.C. 3728 against a judgment obtained by a debtor against the United States;

(vi) Offsets or recoupments under common law, State law, or Federal statutes specifically prohibiting offsets or recoupments of particular types of debts; or

(vii) Offsets in the course of judicial proceedings, including bankruptcy.

(3) Unless otherwise provided for by contract or law, debts or payments that are not subject to administrative offset under 31 U.S.C. 3716 may be collected by administrative offset under